

**STATEMENT OF A. DURAND JONES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1113, TO AUTHORIZE AN EXCHANGE OF LAND AT FORT FREDERICA NATIONAL MONUMENT, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**JULY 15, 2004**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on H.R. 1113. This bill would authorize an exchange of land at Fort Frederica National Monument.

The Department supports an exchange of land between Christ Church, Frederica and Fort Frederica National Monument, as outlined in H.R. 1113. Although appraisals have not been completed for the two parcels, we expect that the value of the land received by the National Park Service (NPS) will be more than the value of the land given up so there will be no need for land acquisition funding. The NPS would incur increased operational costs associated with the exchange because of the archeological value to the park of the acquired lands. However, the amount of those costs cannot be determined until the significance of the resources present on the site NPS acquires is established.

The Department testified in support of this bill at a House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands hearing on April 8, 2003. At the House markup the bill was amended to adjust the amount of land to be given by the NPS to Christ Church from 4.8 acres to 6 acres in order to provide sufficient land for the church to complete their development project. As a part of this process, the NPS worked closely with

Representative Kingston's office to assure that the historic scene of the National Monument will be protected and that the park's artifact storage facility and other buildings would remain within the park boundary.

H.R. 1113 would authorize the Secretary to convey to Christ Church, Frederica, located on St. Simons Island, Georgia approximately 6 acres of land within the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument in exchange for approximately 8.7 acres of land near Fort Frederica that will be acquired by Christ Church. Upon completion of the exchange, the Secretary shall revise the boundary of Fort Frederica National Monument and administer the land acquired through the exchange as part of the monument.

Fort Frederica National Monument is located 12 miles northeast of Brunswick on St. Simons Island, Georgia. The monument's authorized boundary contains 250 acres and preserves the remains of a fortified town established and laid out by Governor James Oglethorpe in 1736 to defend against invasion from Spanish colonies in Florida.

Fort Frederica was one of the earliest English settlements in what ultimately became the State of Georgia, preceded by Fort King George (1721), located near Darien, Georgia, and the Cities of Savannah (1733) and Augusta (1735), also established and planned by Oglethorpe. Fort Frederica was a prosperous community of substantial homes whose residents were tradesmen and farmers supplying the garrison stationed there much the same way communities provide goods and services to military installations today. In 1739, Britain and Spain entered a war that eventually involved Fort Frederica. After the

1748 treaty, Frederica's military garrison was withdrawn and the town of Fort Frederica fell into decline. In 1758, a fire destroyed most of the existing structures.

Fort Frederica National Monument was established on May 26, 1936. Subsequent legislation increased the authorized boundary to 250 acres and directed the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the Battle of Bloody Marsh memorial site on St. Simons Island. Subject to the 250-acre limitation, the Secretary was also authorized to acquire additional marshland acreage west of the Frederica River, across from the National Monument, for additional protection of the historic scene.

On June 29, 1993, following a lengthy campaign involving the efforts and support of the Trust for Public Land and many private citizens of St. Simons Island, Fort Frederica acquired 28 acres of land, including river frontage on the south side of the town site, that had been planned for a major marina development. This acquisition preserved the historic view of the river approach to Fort Frederica. The 6-acre parcel that H.R. 1113 directs the Secretary to give to Christ Church is within this 28-acre acquisition.

The 8.7-acre site that Christ Church proposes to exchange for the land at Fort Frederica contains archeological remains that have been established to be from the colonial period. Tradition indicates that the land includes General Ogelthorpe's home, however we are unaware of any archeological survey work that has been completed on this tract to positively determine if this is the case.

The main town site within the National Monument contains several well preserved and partially reconstructed colonial ruins. There may be additional administrative and operational costs associated with protecting a small archeological site detached from the main park unit and it has not been determined if that cost is commensurate with the limited additional interpretive value of the site if it only contains additional Frederica era resources but does not include Oglethorpe's home.

That completes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or any members of the subcommittee may have.